TEACHING

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Editorial

THE NEXT ISSUE of *Teaching* (March 1961) will be a special one on the Teaching of Hindi. This is a subject of interest to all schools in India for, if Hindi is to find its place eventually in the educational set-up of this country, it is the schools that must prepare the ground for it.

Articles will be welcome on any aspect of the teaching of this subject. For instance: when should Hindi begin; methods of teaching Hindi; textbooks in Hindi; how Hindi can be made a workable language; the place of Hindi in the school curriculum; availability of children's literature in Hindi; teachers of Hindi; building up a Hindi library; visual and other aids in the teaching of Hindi; Hindi as a medium of instruction. Any one of these topics as well as others would prove useful to our readers.

External Examinations in Secondary Schools in England and Wales

IN ENGLAND AND WALES the secondary stage of education begins at the age of eleven. About 90 per cent of children transfer at that age to separate secondary schools. The remainder stay in full-range schools where an attempt is made to provide the same type of education as in the secondary schools, as far as conditions will permit. It is the intention of the Government and the local education authorities that all children will be able to transfer to separate secondary schools by the early nineteen-sixties.

Background of 'grammar' and 'modern' schools

At the age of eleven some children are selected to follow a strictly academic, or 'grammar' course. The remainder attend less academically inclined secondary, or 'modern' schools. Over the country as a whole about 20 per cent go to grammar schools, although in some areas the proportion is as low as 10 per cent, in others as high as 40, and in a few even more. The picture is further complicated by the existence of separate technical secondary schools in some parts of the country, and by a comprehensive organization in others, although even inside the comprehensive school the same separation of children into grammar and modern courses takes place. The general picture of 20 per cent grammar and 80 per cent modern is, however, fair for the country as a whole.

Only against this background is it possible to understand the present examination system, and especially the change of attitude towards examinations that has occurred during the past ten years. Until the end of World War II, only the grammar schools were interested in external examinations. They took the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate examinations.

Special examinations before World War II

The School Certificate was designed for the average grammar school pupil who had worked reasonably well over a five-year secondary course. It was a group examination, the certificate being awarded only if passes were obtained in five (or sometimes six) subjects, which had to include English, a second language, and mathematics or a science. It was required as a necessary minimum qualification for entry to the universities or the teachers' training colleges. Many professional bodies accepted it as the necessary preliminary qualification for entry, and many employers, for example, banks and local government offices, made it a necessary condition for employment.

The Higher School Certificate Examination was a specialist examination taken after two years' further study. It was normally taken in two main subjects and two subsidiaries.

Post-war change of attitude

The educational climate after World War II was against examinations. An attempt was made to restrict them to those pupils who intended to go on to a tertiary stage of education at the university, the training college, or the technical college. Employers were to be encouraged to accept their employees on headmasters' recommendations, and pupils who intended to specialize in a subject were not to be examined in it at lower than specialist level.

In furtherance of this policy, the General Certificate of Education was designed. The policy failed, but the G.C.E. remained, and indeed is flourishing beyond all expectations. As soon as it was started, employers began to demand it; professional organizations restated their entrance qualifications in terms of G.C.E. passes; and many headmasters were unwilling to allow their pupils to specialize until they had first passed their specialist subject at a lower level.

The new ' O ' and ' A ' level examinations

The General Certificate of Education is organized at two levels, namely Ordinary, or ' O ' level; and Advanced, or ' A ' level. It is a subject examination and can be taken at either level in any one or more of a wide range of subjects. The Ministry of Education Report (1957) lists 34.

The ' O ' level is aimed at the reasonably good grammar school pupil after a five-year secondary course. Weaker grammar school pupils often take a further year to pass, and exceptionally able pupils often take it in four years, although they are only allowed to do so upon the production of a headmaster's certificate stating that this is educationally desirable. Many grammar school teachers think that the pass at the ' O ' level is somewhat too high for the average grammar school pupil. Not more than half the grammar school entry (i.e., 10 per cent of the entire sixteen-year-old age group) pass ' O ' level in five subjects.

The ' A ' level is directed at the eighteen-year-old grammar school pupil. It is customary to take one, two, or possibly three ' A ' level subjects. Local education authorities award university scholarships upon performance in ' A ' level, many authorities being prepared to award a scholarship on a good performance in two ' A ' subjects.

The 'S ' level. An extension of ' O ' and ' A ' papers

In addition to the ' O ' and ' A ' level papers, Scholarship, or ' S ' papers are set for the awarding of about 3,000 State scholarships to the universities each year. This is not an additional level. The papers are designed to be taken in conjunction with ' A ' level. The standard of knowledge required is about the same, but the questions are designed to reveal good honours degree potential. They require a deeper insight into the subject, and a greater ability to organize knowledge than is demanded from the ordinary ' A ' level candidate. Owing to the fierce competition that has developed for these State scholarships, there is a growing tendency to take ' S ' papers only after three years in the grammar school sixth form, which means three years after taking ' O ' level.

Organization of school examinations

The conduct of the G.C.E. is in the hands of nine examining bodies. They are independent organizations, but derive their power in virtue of official recognition by the Minister of Education. In theory there is no reason why any other organization should not set itself up to examine at G.C.E. level. But in fact it could not do so, for without the Minister's recognition the examination would not be accepted for any of the purposes for which the examinations of the nine existing boards are accepted, and therefore candidates would not be forthcoming.

All nine examining boards are closely connected with the schools and the universities by their constitution. Their constitutions, however, vary. The London University and the Durham University boards are sub-committees of the governing body of their respective universities, and their decisions receive official ratification by the university. The Northern Universities Joint Board and the Southern Universities Joint Board, both of which serve several universities, are mainly composed of representatives of the universities involved, nominated by the university governing bodies. The Oxford Board, the Cambridge Board, and the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board, are more loosely connected with their universities, but their universities are strongly represented on them.

The Welsh Joint Board contains strong representation from the Welsh universities, but also contains representatives of the Welsh local education authorities. The Associated Examination Board, which is an *ad hoc* body created at the end of World War II to cover the special needs of technical students, is composed of representatives of the universities, the local education authorities and industry. All the boards have representatives of the teachers on them, usually chosen through the teachers' organizations.

The boards normally work through a main committee and subject panels. Both teachers and universities are represented on the subject panels, membership of which is not confined to membership of the main committee. Teachers and members of the university are co-opted for their specialist knowledge, and close liaison with schools and universities is thus secured at all stages.

The examinations are further kept in close contact with the needs of the schools by the encouragement of criticism of the papers by the schools, and most boards have worked out machinery for dealing with these criticisms. Schools are also encouraged to draw up their own examination syllabuses, and the boards readily accept these syllabuses as alternatives to the main syllabus, subject to their suitability as to breadth and depth. There is the further safeguard that

all schools are free to choose their own examining board, and a board that lost touch with the needs of the schools would soon find the fact reflected in its entry. The examinations of all boards are regarded as interchangeable for qualification purposes, and a student wishing to enter a particular university need not take the G.C.E. of the board attached to that university.

Such a system requires a co-ordinating body. Day-to-day co-ordination is obtained by regular meetings of the secretaries of the boards, but the co-ordination of policy, and the maintenance of standards, is obtained through the Secondary Schools Examinations Council, which is a body set up by the Minister of Education for the purpose. It contains nominees of the teachers' organizations, the local education authorities, the Ministry of Education, and the universities.

Increase in number of candidates

The number of candidates taking the examination has grown rapidly since its inception, as may be seen from the following table:

TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES

TAKING GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

	'O' Level	'A' Level
1951	133,792	36,677
1955	231,422	53,991
1957	239,666	70,342
1958	271,862	77,503

The causes for this increase are complex. With the compulsory school life ending at fifteen, many grammar school pupils used not to stay at school long enough to take the examination. This early leaving is on the decline, and this is reflected in the statistics. The increasing tendency for entrance qualifications to university, training college and other organizations to be expressed in terms of G.C.E. is also reflected, for candidates frequently have to sit a second time to obtain passes in a subject in which they originally failed.

But the most interesting of all is the growing tendency for the non-grammar schools to enter candidates for the G.C.E. When the secondary modern school was in its infancy, it was fashionable to welcome its freedom from examinations. It has been found, however, that boys and girls will remain at school beyond the compulsory age of fifteen if given an incentive for doing so, and one of the biggest incentives is the opportunity of sitting for an examination which gives entry to a wide range of professional occupations. Moreover experience has shown that with the somewhat different approach to learning that obtains in the secondary modern school,

secondary modern candidates pass subjects in the G.C.E. In 1951 the number of secondary modern candidates taking the G.C.E. was virtually nil. In 1958 it was more than 10,000.

New level of examination sought

This is, however, only part of the present-day tendency for external examinations to spread into the secondary modern school. Most secondary modern pupils have not the ability to pass in more than one or two 'O' level subjects at the age of sixteen. Consequently head teachers have been looking for an examination which is somewhat lower in level than the G.C.E., but which will act as an incentive to secondary modern pupils to remain at school beyond the age of fifteen. As a result they have been turning to another series of examinations which until recently did not impinge upon the schools at all.

There exist a number of examining bodies which have been organizing examinations for many years in connexion with part-time adult education in evening institutes. Some are national in character (for example, the Royal Society of Arts) and some regional (for example, the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes). Many of them were founded as long ago as the middle of the last century, when they arose out of the upsurge of popular self-education in the middle eighteen-hundreds. During the past fifty years they have settled down into serving a limited but useful purpose in connexion with evening institute education.

In their search for suitable examinations for secondary modern pupils, head teachers have been turning to these evening institute examinations, and the examining bodies, realizing that their existing examinations were not suitable for the purposes of the day schools, have responded by organizing examinations at a level lower than the 'O' level of the G.C.E. The commonest type is a group examination requiring passes in four or five subjects, with compulsory English.

The picture, however, is confused, for the situation is changing rapidly, and owing to the local character of most of these examining bodies, it varies from region to region.

Summing up

It will thus be seen that the educational climate has changed drastically during the past ten years in its attitude towards external examinations. Most teachers would still adhere to the principles they enunciated in the nineteen-forties. They would say that ideally they do not want to be restricted in their teaching by examination syllabuses and the need to get pupils to the arbitrary standard of a pass mark.

But events are proving too much for them. The G.C.E. is going from strength to strength, and the sub-G.C.E. examinations are obviously beginning to snowball along. In the interests of encouraging pupils to remain at school beyond the compulsory age, most teachers are prepared to go more than half-way in compromising with their ideals. The tide is therefore flowing strongly in favour of external examinations, and the signs are that as yet it is nowhere near full flood. Certainly no one appears to be anxious to stem it.

EDWARD BRITTEN

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Hints to Young Teachers

ON THREE OCCASIONS, under three very different sets of conditions, and at three different times in my own life, I have been given advice on how to succeed as a teacher. Once (almost forty years ago!) when I began life as a student teacher, little older than my charges, once when I joined the staff of a public school, and once when I went to teach in what was, to all intents and purposes, a slum school! It would be difficult to find conditions which varied more greatly than in the three schools concerned—and as difficult to find advice which varied any more. For I was given three guides—almost golden rules—to follow. These (I do not give them in the order of actuality) were:

> Make your pupils respect you.
> Make them afraid of you.
> Make them like you.

I have often pondered over these suggestions, not only because I wondered what exactly each of my would-be mentors had in mind, not only because, to me at least, they seemed so different, but because all of them were concerned with my pupils' attitude to me and not with my attitude to them. Yet, when I am called upon, as ageing professors so often are, to offer advice in such a situation, I find myself more concerned with the attitude of a teacher to his pupils than with their attitude to him. And of course I realize that the most difficult thing of all is to give advice which is practical, something which can be acted on. However, it often has to be

done and here I find myself faced with doing it in writing, instead of speech, which is even more difficult.

To anyone starting out to become a teacher, whether faced with the initial decision about a career, or whether just starting a training course in a college, or just taking up his first appointment, I would as a start make a purely practical suggestion. Look back on your own experience, think of all the teachers who taught you and choose those who most influenced you. Ask yourself some questions about them. Why did they influence you? In what ways did they influence you? How exactly did this influence operate on you? What did it make you do or think? What were the qualities of these particular people which made them different from others?

Most of us can look back with affection and respect and a long continued sense of indebtedness to Old So-and-So—the man or woman who, long years ago in many cases, did something, and was something, which made us different then and which has stayed with us ever since. They gave us something which Time has not been able to steal away. A passionate interest in a particular subject, a new ideal to live for, a wider understanding of a subject, or of people, a new attitude to living . . . things which we cannot define perhaps, but which we know to exist.

These are the men and women who should be taken as models for the young teacher to grow into. Study technique and method by all means, study psychology and philosophy, but remember that, in the end, education is something to do with boys and girls and not only with the tricks of a trade or the theories of the pundits. My model is perhaps composite, combining many features of several people. If I had to choose the one quality which stood out above everything else it would be their humanity.

By this I mean their capacity for a sympathetic understanding of those they taught. When we failed to do well their first thought was whether they had done as well as they ought—they saw their faults first, those of their pupils second. Before they told me to ' do it again ' they said: ' Let me try and explain it again, in a different way.' Their persistence in effort helped to breed in us something of the same kind, a determination to stick it out. Then of course it was patently obvious that they had a passionate interest in their subject, and we caught that interest, for interests are caught, not taught. Moreover, they demanded of themselves what they demanded of us. Old X, such a stickler for punctuality, was always punctual himself, or nearly always. I knew him to be late only twice for class. The first time he said: ' I apologize for being late and ask you to forgive me as the reason was beyond my control.' The second time—' I am late for no good reason. I can and do apologize.

You cannot forgive me, as I have neither reason nor excuse.' Playing to the gallery? Being an old fool? No—helping us to grow up by treating us as grown-ups.

Above all—they never preached at us! These were the men who made me seek a standard of performance because they so obviously set one for themselves. I learned to be ashamed of untidy work just because Old Nick set for himself such a standard of precision on blackboards, and whenever he wrote in my exercise books. He never tried to fob us off with half truths or excuses, he always said bluntly—'Sorry, I forgot to do it', or whatever it was. He was witty, but never sarcastic. He could be critical, but never discouraging—and no good work ever went unrewarded by his sympathetic comment. In brief—he was one of the encouraging kind, cheering youth on to excel itself. We must have let him down pretty often, but he at least hid his disappointments from us!

There, then, is a piece of advice which few cannot practise. Choose a good model and try to be like him. It can be taken a step further—by using oneself as a model—to remind oneself that others are not so different. Our needs are their needs, and we share their frailties.

We all like to be recognized, to be approved by our fellow beings, to feel that we have 'a place in the sun'. All good teachers, knowing this, try to use this knowledge in their job. The worst of pupils has some feature which is better than all his other features, however bad they are. Seek it out, recognize it, use it, even if you have to invent almost purposeless jobs and situations. Above all, share out the 'distinctions' in some way, so that everyone gets a chance to be monitor or leader.

Remember that 'nothing succeeds like success', and give everybody some chance to succeed. With unfailing regularity I used to be bottom of the fortnightly lists in all kinds of things. What an encouragement to effort! It was Old Nick who, knowing that I had changed schools a lot and so missed much of the basic stuff, one day handed me out a special test—made for me to succeed—and then put me at the top of a list or two! Today there's a lot of talk about 'pep-doses' and 'shots-in-the-arm'—that is what Old Nick's device was to me. And, like many others, having once found I could do something I got a kick out of it, a new degree of confidence, and began to do better. We all have to learn to compete against others, but one's first competitor is oneself, one's inabilities, lack of courage, lack of the 'will to win'. If you can build these things up in your pupils you have started them on the road to success at school, and in after life.

One of the ways in which teachers differ from each other is in

regard to the ability to make things interesting. Look back for a moment, and remember that some subjects were interesting with some teachers, and dull with others. This is nothing to do with the subject. It is a function of the teacher, and especially of his interest in the subject and his pupils. 'Make it interesting'—many a college tutor has said that to a student on teaching practice! How hard it is to do, and how hard it is to explain or demonstrate how it can be done!

First of all—remember that youth has its interests, in games, in collecting, in pictures, in film-stars, in hero-worship. Get to know these interests, and use them in your teaching. How they can be used depends on subject and setting. You teach History, English, Geography, Science; surely point after point can be linked up with children's interests? 'Did you see that film about Hannibal crossing the Alps?' Afonso de Albuquerque led the expedition to the attack at high tide—now, why did he choose that exact time?'—and so you make use of young So-and-So, son of a fisherman, who knows by experience that the tide will carry boats up-river even if there's no wind, or the wind is in the opposite direction. Things have to be tied up with what children know, what they have done, what they have seen.

Moreover, all these things lie around, at hand, outside the school. There's the old fort with its ancient guns—go and have a mock attack with half the class defending it. But argue it out first, like the commanders of old did. The best time to attack—why? The best place—why? Planning it all—how will you give signals? How keep contact? How change the plan if things go wrong? Most pupils will react to this kind of approach because it fits in with their interests, and because when history becomes interesting they cannot avoid learning it!

This question of interest, which I believe to be of central importance in teaching, can be tackled in another way. Is it not true that our interest is attracted by that which is new, unfamiliar or strange? Do we not react to the *problem in the situation*—something which challenges our attention, which by some magic of the mind causes interest to well up in us? It would be of advantage to every teacher to use this approach in his teaching. So often we are content to tell, to dictate, to inform—we so seldom ask Why? And when we do we so seldom set the problem in a manner which attracts the attention, interest and effort of our pupils. If we did we should have the reward of success in our teaching, and our pupils the excitement of discovery and the satisfaction of achievement.

This approach has another value. It makes more easy the development of a new relationship between teacher and taught.

Tradition has set the teacher in authority over the pupil. Our own limitations have led us to think of this as a form of power which demands obedience—'their's not to reason why'. Let us have authority, but let it develop from the logic of the social situation, let it lead us to accept the responsibility which should always accompany any claim to rights. And let us use our authority, as much as we can, in the sense not of our power, but of our wider knowledge and greater maturity. Opportunity has given us the chance to lead. Let us remember that those who follow most willingly are the ones who serve most freely. It should be the aim of every young teacher to inspire, not inhibit, to carry his class with him, not force them to follow. One step towards doing this is to build up trust and understanding, respect and co-operation between his class and himself. It is for this reason that good teachers seek the co-operation of their pupils in planning work, organizing activities, and so on. By doing so they smooth their own path and contribute to the social development of their pupils.

This is all an old story. We all know it well. Yet teachers do little to put into operation ideas and methods which in our hearts we know to be true but which we are afraid of in our minds! Teachers, young teachers above all, are afraid to come out of the ivory tower, with its intoxicating sense of power, down to the drab realities of life. They want to keep their so-called power and to retain the prestige which, in the Asian tradition of the *guru*, has made them men apart from the common herd. They lack those qualities which matter so much to the teacher—confidence, courage, and faith in themselves.

Nor are they always helped by conditions around them—the cynical staff, the Principal harassed by detail and who has long since lost interest in the real problems of education, or the Inspector who is a policeman rather than a collaborator in the search for the real ends of education. Young teachers especially, full of progressive ideas and enthusiasm, and fully aware of their shortcomings and inefficiencies, find that their elders are not their betters—they are merely aged anachronisms, reactionary and timid, who have lost faith and ideals.

Teaching is not merely a way of earning a living, important though that is. It is a faith to be served through thick and thin. It demands courage to withstand those who are apathetic, cynical and obstructive. It demands a sense of dedication, a willingness to make sacrifices and a readiness to suffer. Above all it demands an ever ready willingness to retain the common touch, to be one with one's pupils, and an unwavering acceptance of one of history's greatest lessons—that man has gone upward to higher and better

things through those qualities of the spirit which come to bloom and fruition in an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding and sympathy. The teacher needs not only to be a worshipper at the shrine of learning, but a missionary in the service of childhood.

T. L. Green

Parent-Teacher Associations

Not long ago we would have disposed of the idea of a Parent-Teacher Association as just one more American fad. For thus have we been given to disposing of any idea that is novel to our stereotyped educational acceptances, and the easiest way to brush aside a proposition is to label it as 'foreign'. It is easy to forget that some of the most valuable aspects of Indian education were originally foreign, and it is to these we now cling.

If our schools were all that we desired them to be, a Parent-Teacher Association would be superfluous. It is because our educational system lacks so much that such associations have become necessary, and only the very conservative would fail to recognize their value. The teacher in India can no longer cope with the burden that he is expected to carry, and it has become necessary for the parent to share in the business of instruction and education.

Yet we resist the concept of a well-formulated body within which the sustained association of parents with teachers can live and grow. A half-hearted union is a travesty of the original idea of a Parent-Teacher Association. This was intended to be a vital, educational-cum-social group that serves child, teacher, parent and community. Seen in these terms, it cannot escape organization; it cannot survive without a favourable environment for growth.

Today the need for a Parent-Teacher Association has been recognized by our educationists in New Delhi and the idea cannot be easily abandoned. It is not very widely accepted, but it has invaded certain schools with a positiveness that has for ever destroyed *laissez-faire* in such matters, and that promises to influence the development both of schools and of education.

The parent, the teacher and the child

To the parent, the association offers the assurance that his child will be studied, instructed and assisted with care, regularity, understanding and vision. The fact that the parent is made to see

himself as an essential part of this process of enlightenment gives him a stake not only in the education of his child, but also in the school of which his child is a product. Incidentally, therefore, the parent educates himself and contributes to the well-being of the community. I have seen hard-worked parents attend meetings of small parent-teacher groups, and they show an interest and a vitality that is truly encouraging. Fathers are generally keener than mothers, but no doubt the retiring nature of the average middle-class mother explains her comparative backwardness. Every parent who has been actively associated with these groups has benefited in some tangible way by his association, and there is also an intangible development that adults are unconscious of in themselves, but which is nevertheless apparent to teachers.

To the teacher, such associations bring encouragement, status and a sense of achievement. The hopelessness that a young teacher feels when confronted with a class of sixty children is relieved by the knowledge that thirty of these children have parents who will supervise their homework, encourage good reading habits, and assist in school activities. Where the child is considered a common product of the school and the home, co-operation is bound to result. It is amazing how close such associations can bring apparently isolated parents and teachers.

For the child, who is the most important person concerned, Parent-Teacher Associations provide mental and emotional security. I have watched children grow greatly excited about PTA elections and offer to help with the social side of such events. They are not above speculating on the chances of success of this or that parent, and the knowledge that their own parents and teachers have the confidence of a majority does much to increase and maintain confidence in the elected.

There are dangers to be faced too, and they are not difficult to see. An interfering Parent-Teacher Association can be a liability. Such an association must understand the limits of its activities. It does not exist to work the ordinary machinery of school life, to interfere between principal and staff, to plan the curriculum, to revise the school's teaching methods, or to assess the strength and weaknesses of the school staff as an instructing body. Nevertheless the true functions of this association should enable parents to assess schools, apart from the measure of success at examinations. Only a forceful principal can initiate, steer and stimulate a Parent-Teacher Association, and to the strong administrator such an association is a manifest aid.

MURIEL WASI

An Investigation into the Reading of Journals and Magazines

TOWARDS THE END OF 1954, two hundred and seventeen boys and girls of the senior section of Lawrence School, Lovedale, in the Nilgiris, co-operated in this investigation. There were 174 boys and 43 girls, ranging in age from 8 to 17 years. The group had varied cultural, racial, economic, linguistic, and literary backgrounds. All members had been resident in the school, varying from a minimum period of one year to a maximum period of eight to nine years.

Aims of the investigation

(*i*) To discover the extent of the group's reading of magazines, newspapers and comics.

(*ii*) To find out the range of popularity of these magazines, newspapers and comics.

(*iii*) To discover if full use was being made of the material offered by the school in the library, reading rooms and House lounges.

(*iv*) To find out if, in their reading, there was any discernible difference between the bright and the average child. Intelligence was to be judged by attainment and performance in bi-monthly and annual examinations.

A special study is being made of scholars who had come to us after winning the Government of India Public School Merit Examination, but this is not yet complete.

(*v*) To find out if hobbies and other leisure-hour activities had anything to do with the choice of specific reading material.

(*vi*) To help pupils improve their taste in reading through guidance and personal interviews.

Method of investigation

The method followed throughout the inquiry was mainly subjective, based on personal interviews and group discussions. The results were therefore largely gleaned from these casual interviews with the children, informal talks, group discussions, and a close observation of reading habits during leisure time spent in the library, reading rooms, clubs and House lounges. This, of course, was done in a most unobtrusive and friendly manner, and extended over a period of five to six years. A questionnaire, reprinted at the end of this article, was circulated but no attempt was made to employ statistical devices for these reasons:

(*i*) There was a wide diversity in the group in so far as race, sex, age, culture and literacy were concerned.

(*ii*) The cross-section was nevertheless small, specific and limited. The entire group was however divided into four distinct sections, as indicated in Table I below, because (*a*) to a large extent the junior children, aged 8-10 years, belonged to the same academic class. Similarly the age groups of 11-12, 13-14 and 15-17 attended respectively the same academic class, and (*b*) it was found convenient to make use of these four groupings in order to understand the relative level of maturity within the respective groups in so far as the reading of magazines was concerned.

TABLE I

	Age Group 8-10 (34)		Age Group 11-12 (68)		Age Group 13-14 (72)		Age Group 15-17 (43)		Total 217
	Indian	Anglo-Indian	Indian	Anglo-Indian	Indian	Anglo-Indian	Indian	Anglo-Indian	
Boys	27	3	41	11	43	12	23	14	174
Girls	3	1	3	13	8	9	4	2	43

Each group has been investigated separately. Verbatim statements in response to the questionnaire have been analysed. The results are here concluded with a discussion. General conclusions relevant to each group are also drawn. Where possible the reaction of the children to guidance and in interview is recorded. Improvement in taste and extent in reading magazines is also recorded wherever this was discernible.

Age Group 8-10. Analysis of data

The verbatim statements of 34 children (4 girls and 30 boys) strongly indicated that the group had made no real acquaintance with magazines provided in the school. Two children, a boy and a girl, mentioned the *National Geographic Magazine*; a girl mentioned the *Children's Newspaper*; and two boys mentioned *Sport and Pastime*. Another boy mentioned *Chandamama*—the Hindi edition. Beyond that nothing. It was obvious that the reading of comics predominated in the group.

The classification of comics, read by this group, falls largely into the following categories which are reported in order of popularity.

(*i*) FUNNY COMICS: *Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse Weekly* and *Walt Disney* were immensely popular, because of the jokes contained and fun to be had from them.

(*ii*) TARZAN COMICS: Popular because of the jungle and animal

stories. The fighting and excitement portrayed seemed to account mainly for their choice and popularity.

(*iii*) ROY ROGERS AND DELL COMICS: Next in order of popularity, for general reasons of excitement.

(*iv*) Parental pressure appeared to be the reason for a few children reading the classics. *Alice in Wonderland*, *Joan of Arc*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and so on were selected since 'they contained good English which consequently had a good influence on the children's own English'.

On the whole the junior group showed no desire at all to read newspapers or worthwhile magazines. This in spite of the fact that various magazines and newspapers were subscribed to by the school. There was in fact evidence of apathy towards this form of reading. The school imposed a ban on the reading of comic papers because adult opinion was found to be unanimously against this. Confiscation was ruthless and made by masters as well as prefects. But in spite of all precautions comics continued to reach the school by way of visiting parents, or from home through the post, or bought during journeys to and from school. Swopping and exchanging of comics was quite frequent and they infiltrated the whole group. During group discussions, interviews and debates various reasons were advanced for the popularity of comics. These were as follows:

(*i*) Many children preferred comic papers because pictorially and illustratively they appealed to their visual sense. The quick movement of events traced in colour and in picture, together with 'snappy' sentences, were the deciding factors in determining their popularity. Action words like 'bang', 'boom', 'crunch', 'munch' and so on, had a dramatic appeal. Self-identification with the main character was made easier and sympathy was established with him in the shortest possible time. 'Even an illiterate,' it was said, 'could follow the stories in comics.'

(*ii*) Comics were cheap to buy. At the most a comic would cost 75 naye paise and it could be exchanged by paying a sum of 6 naye paise to the shopkeeper. This ensured wide and multiple circulation.

(*iii*) Comics gave outlines of stories in simplified English which was easily understood. They were suitable substitutes for thicker volumes, in the limited leisure time enjoyed in school. Some children remarked that comics brought the classics, like *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and others, within the ken of their comprehension. The children believed they would find encouragement to read the originals later on.

(*iv*) Comics on space travel, satellites, sputniks, space-ships and allied subjects, seemed to have made children science-conscious. Their imagination was stimulated. They were helped to understand abstract concepts in concrete and pictorial terms.

(*v*) Comics were important for reasons of relaxation. The children found fun and amusement in the light reading, jokes and humour contained in them.

(*vi*) Comics appeared to aid 'good conversation'. They contributed to the children's repertoire of jokes and helped develop their wit and sense of humour. The colloquialisms contained in the text were also appreciated. Comics were equated with intelligent cartoons which provoked spontaneous laughter.

(*vii*) Comics which contained life stories of famous authors, such as H. G. Wells, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and others, seemed to have contributed to general knowledge.

Other observations and educational implications

An interesting observation regarding the group as a whole was that all children, whether serious-minded or not, sought 'fun', excitement, and adventure in their comic reading. Two emotionally inhibited children, coming from rather disturbed homes, considered the reading of magazines or comics as a waste of time. Neither read anything at all in their spare time. A boy whose background was both educationally and culturally stimulating (whose father was in the foreign service) denounced outright the reading of comics, which he felt were in bad taste, catering to poor intelligence. Here the potency of the home influence was discernible. In regard to their hobbies, which were still nebulous, no magazine seemed to have appealed to them. *Sport and Pastime* was read by two children because of their interest in the game of cricket.

The group had on the whole a tremendous enthusiasm for reading. The task was to re-educate taste through extensive and sympathetic guidance. Their antipathy to good magazines was to be eradicated gently. No ruthless attempt to denounce comics was made, but magazines of various kinds were brought into the classroom and were read out in an attempt to redirect reading enthusiasm. The children were thus brought into closer contact with finer reading material available both in the classroom and elsewhere.

Age Group 11-12. Analysis of data

Although the 68 children of this group of 16 girls and 52 boys had extended their reading to include magazines, their enthusiasm for reading comics had not altogether died. Most of the group read comics and magazines simultaneously. Their reading was not solely confined to comics. Their acquaintance with various magazines available in the school had not only increased immensely, but also the quality of the magazines chosen showed a tremendous improvement on the whole. Reading material of the present group

can, therefore, be treated in two distinct groups as, (1) comics and (2) magazines.

Group 1—Comics. Although this group did not cease to read *Dell, Tarzan, Cowboy, Mickey Mouse Weekly,* 'westerns', and 'funnies', they had added those based on the classics, such as *David Copperfield* and *Ivanhoe.* Science comics, fiction comics, historical and war comics as well as many others seemed to have claimed their attention. Developing interests and hobbies also seemed to influence their choice. 'Laughter', 'enjoyment', 'wit' and 'humour' were the main motives behind choosing the 'funnies', *Mickey Mouse Weekly* and *Dell* comics. 'Adventure', 'excitement' and the fighting portrayed were sought in others. The quality of comics chosen showed much improvement on the whole.

Group 2—Magazines. From Table II printed at the end of this article it will be seen that the extent of reading had largely expanded and acquaintance with various magazines was rather wider than that of the age group 8-10. Motives given for choice were varied and intelligent. The level of reading had improved and matured. Magazines like *Sport and Pastime, Illustrated Weekly of India, National Geographic Magazine, Time, Reader's Digest, Boy's Own Paper, Scout, Treasure Chest, Mail, The Hindu, World Sports, Popular Science, Sunday Standard, Shankar's Weekly, Punch, Children's Digest, Illustrated London News, Heroine, Sunshine* and *Chandamama* were known and read by the children. One observation which merits serious study emerged from this particular group analysis. It became obvious that the group was passing through a transitional phase in its reading. An attempt was being made to readjust to reading other than that of comics. There seemed to be a growing interest in the world outside; a general desire for information had gained ground within the group. Hobbies were being channelled, to compel the use of magazines like *Popular Science, The Boy's Own Paper* and *Scout.* Since the accent on sport is quite strong in the school, magazines like *Sport and Pastime* were read by a large number of the group. The amount of reading was not only large but also varied and intelligent. *Shankar's Weekly* and *Punch* were known to one outstanding student. The world news contained in *Time* seemed to have interested only two students. Others read the publication for the Sports, Medicine, People, and Movie sections. For its 'fun', 'humour' and 'jokes', to be absorbed and used as a social asset, the *Illustrated Weekly of India* seemed to be popular.

Age Group 13-14. Analysis of data

71 children, comprising 17 girls and 54 boys of the age group 13-14, formed the bulk of this study. The list of magazines given

by these children was rather formidable especially when compared with those read by the younger groups. Their interest in comics had not only definitely declined but comics were openly denounced. The group had substantially enlarged its acquaintance with the wide variety of magazines available in the school. In developing their hobbies, general interests and other intellectual pursuits the children had been compelled to make use of the various magazines available. The trend was towards mature reading. Although emotional stories with action were still preferred, stories which were exciting, fast moving and adventurous, the majority of the group was moving towards objective and factual reading. An interest in current events and news of the world seemed to be growing. The interest in sport seemed to have gained momentum too among those who were anxious to maintain the already strong tradition of the institution in sport. However the present group seemed to have attached too much importance to sport. Pictures and pictorial representation of world news made a strong appeal to the majority of the children. *The Children's Newspaper*, edited by Arthur Mee, seemed to have fulfilled their need for background news. This is expressed in simple language suitable to their age and mental ability.

'Jokes', 'satire', 'wit', 'repartee' continued to be pursued since they were values cherished as social assets. Incidentally the more serious-minded students monopolized the humorous magazines, like *Punch* and *Shankar's Weekly*. Their acquaintance with them was thus wider than that of the average student. The girls, too seemed to be choosing magazines which catered to their hobbies and specific interests. They enjoyed *Woman and Home*, *Screen* and *Heiress*. There was no definite cleavage between the reading habits of boys and girls. Some boys read *Screen* but girls eschewed *Boy's Own Paper* and *Popular Science*. In the last analysis it was the interest of the individual which determined the choice and variety of magazine. One of the brightest children's remarks was regarding *The Reader's Digest*, and sums up the trend of this group. It throws abundant light on what is expected from their reading material.

> '*The Reader's Digest* is educative as well as good reading and covers a wide range of topics from politics to fashions—also short stories about life. They may concern children, adults or just poor people. They are usually fast moving and are just relaxing not absorbing you so completely as to be distracting.'

Age Group 15-17. Analysis of data

This age group comprised 43 students in all, 6 girls and 37 boys. A distinctly maturer level of reading was revealed, especially when

compared with the age group 8-10. The general trend seemed to have moved towards the factual and the objective; objectivity in news, a desire to gather information regarding world events, politics, all seemed to influence the choice of reading material on the whole. Hence the popularity of magazines such as *Time*, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, *Reader's Digest*, *Children's Newspaper*, and *National Geographic Magazine*.

Reading matter indicated wider interests and serious hobbies. The variety of material chosen definitely indicated a well-marked desire for reading itself. Each child in the group was not only conversant with a wide variety of magazines (at least three magazines, on the average, were read by each) but was also selective. The quality of reading material was superior and choice discriminative. The multiplicity of motives for choice indicated the wide range of expectations and needs of the group. Vocational aspirations also seemed to have determined the choice of reading to some extent.

Although the habit of reading comics was not altogether absent in this group it was revealing to observe open denunciation of them by comments such as:

> ' I have stopped funnies as they are childish.'
> ' It is a waste of time to read comics.'
> ' They cater to low taste and intelligence.'
> ' They are babyish.'
> ' I have no time for them.'
> ' They spoil our English and arrest our imagination.'

The more serious-minded students in this group, as in others, indicated preference for and acquaintance with magazines including *Shankar's Weekly*, *Blitz*, and *Punch*, and daily newspapers. One student had even shown preference for a particular daily newspaper, *The Hindu*, because, to use his own words, 'it gives correct news'. Although too solitary an instance to prove anything, yet it was quite significant in denoting the growing level of maturity. Another student mentioned *Punch* for its humour. *Blitz* was mentioned by one scholar because ' it is critical of the Government of India'.

An interest in specific hobbies determined the choice of magazines such as *Popular Mechanics*, *Popular Science*, and *Photoplay*. Others pertaining to sport, like *Sport and Pastime* and *World Sport*, seemed to be most popular, which was to be expected in view of the general interest in school sports.

An interest in stories seemed to be waning with this group. As might well be expected, the vocational aspirations of the girls seemed to be prompting them to read *Woman's Own*, *Woman*

and Home, *Heiress*, *Screen* and other film magazines. The boys, on the other hand, wanted *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics* for their interest in engineering and science. It became apparent that children of superior intelligence and scholarship made wider use of the magazines available at school.

Overall, however, the two groups of 13-14 and of 15-17 seemed to show similar tastes in their reading material. There was much in common between the two groups. The 15-17 age group read much less than the 13-14 age group, but this may be accounted for by the fact that the reading of the 15-17 year olds was limited, to a large extent, by the demands of external examinations (Senior Cambridge in this case) for which they were preparing. The demands of textbook reading seemed to have narrowed the extent of their general reading.

Summary and conclusion

The investigation revealed the varied reading tastes of 217 children. Various interests, hobbies and needs—intellectual, cultural and emotional—were sought to be satisfied through the reading material available in the school.

The preference of the group on the whole for comics need not alarm or bring despair to teachers. Children believe that comics fulfil a need. Their interest in comics does not display a depraved taste, as adults, judging by their own standards, are prone to think. Comics are consumed in transient reading, providing amusement, fun, excitement and adventure. Their visual appeal through colour and pictorial story-telling seems to decide the children in their favour. Ruthless confiscation of comics together with their denunciation creates a sense of guilt among the children, and produces tension among the teachers and the taught. Children will indulge in clandestine methods in order to procure comics. As the children mature, their interest in comics declines. They then find them sketchy, inadequate and poor substitutes for magazine reading. This transient interest passes without stress and storm if adults view the problem more maturely and tactfully. With guidance, the interest in comics is soon outgrown.

On the whole there is indiscriminate reading among children. Their enthusiasm for reading leads them to be 'addicted' to reading as such, regardless of the quality of material available. Most children usually read what comes their way to keep them busy in their leisure time. Discriminate, serious reading, for knowledge, information, and intellectual and cultural pursuits, develops later on. The popular belief among students that magazine reading

TABLE II. Showing the relative popularity of certain magazines, and motives for choice

Magazine	Age-group 8-10 (34)	Age-group 11-12 (68)	Age-group 13-14 (72)	Age-group 15-17 (43)	Total Frequencies	Motives for choice
*Sport and Pastime ...	2	10	18	13	43	Interest in sports, hobbies, sports news, pictures of sportsmen and athletes
*Illustrated Weekly of India ...	0	9	14	11	34	Jokes, stories, information, articles and pictures
*Time ...	0	5	18	9	32	Current events, people, news, medicine, cinema, television
*National Geographic Magazine ...	2	5	15	7	29	Colourful pictorial representation of the different parts of the world
* Reader's Digest ...	0	2	12	9	23	Information, good articles, stories and jokes
*Children's Newspaper ...	1	0	15	7	23	Riddles, puzzles, quizzes, and news in simple language
*Boy's Own Paper ...	0	3	7	4	14	Stories of adventure, jokes, things to do, also hints for boys' hobbies
*Mail ...	0	3	8	2	13	Curly Wee, news, sports, and accidents
*The Hindu ...	0	3	7	2	12	News, sports, leading articles, and accidents
*Treasure Chest ...	0	3	9	0	12	Stories, jokes, puzzles, things to do, and addresses for pen friends
World Sport ...	0	1	4	4	9	Sports, and pictures of sports heroes
Scout ...	0	3	2	2	7	Heroic stories about scouts
*Popular Science Monthly ...	0	1	4	2	7	Interest in science and making things
Illustrated London News ...	0	1	3	2	6	Pictures and news of the world in colourful pictorial representation
*Wide World Magazine ...	0	0	5	1	6	Stories of adventure
Champion ...	0	0	2	4	6	Stories, puzzles, riddles and jokes
Shankar's Weekly ...	0	1	2	2	5	Wit, cartoons, jokes and funny articles
Sunday Standard ...	0	1	2	1	4	Articles of interest and sports news
Movie Magazine ...	0	0	4	0	4	Fashions, actors and actresses
Woman's Own ...	0	0	0	4	4	Stories for girls, hints for girls, hobbies and general interest
*Kalki (Tamil) ...	0	0	1	3	4	Stories in Tamil
Heroine ...	0	1	2	0	3	Stories, fashions, aids to beauty
Children's Digest ...	0	1	0	2	3	Stories, jokes and puzzles
Punch ...	0	1	0	2	3	Jokes, satire, wit, repartee, humorous articles and cartoons
*Sunshine ...	0	1	2	0	3	Puzzles, stories and jokes

Screen	...	0	0	2	1	3	Indian actors, actresses and film stories
Blitz	...	0	0	1	2	3	Criticism of the Government of India
Film Magazine	...	0	0	0	3	3	Actors, actresses and fashions
*Chandamama (Hindi)	...	1	1	0	0	2	Stories in Hindi
Caravan	...	0	0	2	0	2	Stories, jokes and puzzles
*Heiress	...	0	0	2	0	2	Stories for girls
American Reporter	...	0	0	1	1	2	News and pictures
Indian Express	...	0	0	1	0	1	Sports, news and accidents
*Woman and Home	...	0	0	1	0	1	Stories, recipes, and knitting patterns
*Needlework Illustrated	...	0	0	1	0	1	Hobbies like needlework and knitting
Popular Mechanics	...	0	0	1	1	2	Electronics and topics of engineering and other scientific interest
Photoplay	...	0	0	0	1	1	Pictures and interest in photography
Kalakund (Tamil)	...	0	0	0	1	1	Stories in Tamil
Chandamama (Kanarese)	...	0	0	1	1	2	Stories in Kanarese
Orient Digest	...	0	0	0	1	1	Variety of news
Life	...	0	0	1	0	1	Pictures and articles

Journals and magazines subscribed to by the school.

distracts them from their serious studies and consequently has an adverse effect on their attainment in examinations was contradicted by the results of the voracious readers of magazines, who proved to be among the brighter scholars. The readers of magazines had not only enlarged their horizon and general knowledge, but developed mental poise. They were also good debaters with wider interests and worthwhile hobbies.

Children coming from educationally backward and emotionally disturbed homes had no taste in reading whatsoever. They read nothing in their leisure and considered reading of any sort as a frivolous pursuit.

The deep-rooted traditions of an institution, its accent on hobbies and other activities, influence to a large extent the choice and popularity of periodicals among a school population. As, for example the present groups' exaggerated concern with sports reading material, which can be linked with the strong sporting traditions of the school.

Group discussions and personal interviews were found to be the most effective means of developing good reading habits.

SHAKUNTALA BHALLA

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name........................ Boy or girl......................

Age........................... Class at school...................

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

1. Do you read regularly any magazines, children's papers or comics? Write down their names.
2. Which of these magazines or comics do you like best of all—and why?
3. Which magazines, papers or comics do you yourself buy?
4. Which do you get from home?
5. Which do you get by 'swopping' or exchanging?
6. Which do you just borrow?
7. Which of them do you get in your school?
8. In all the magazines and comics you read what kind of story do you like best? And why?
9. Who is your favourite character in the stories you read in these magazines and comics?
10. Do you read regularly any magazines connected with your hobbies, sports or practical activities?
11. Do you read any magazines in your own language—Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese, Telugu or Hindi?
12. Do you want your school to buy any new magazines for your reading room? Write down their names below, if any.

Report of the National Service Committee: An Appraisal

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION of the Government of India appointed in 1959 a committee to consider (*i*) how to provide a more lively awareness on the part of educated youth of the purposes and processes of the nation's reconstruction efforts, especially in the rural areas, (*ii*) how to inculcate in youth a sense of discipline, a spirit of social service, dignity of manual labour and dedication to the cause of the country, in order to make up the deficiencies of the present educational system, (*iii*) how to prepare educated youth for the enormous task of national reconstruction, and (*iv*) how to safeguard national security, which would require a reserve of trained personnel to be available in an emergency.

Let us examine this rather ambitious array of aims. The scheme, it is said, should be visualized ' as a measure of educational reform directed towards remedying the observed deficiencies in our educational system ', which presumably results in failure to reach the objectives mentioned above. It must be admitted that the committee has made no new discovery in the so-called deficiencies already pointed out. The question is whether the recommendations embodied in the scheme *will* remedy these deficiencies and produce the idealistic results expected.

The recommendations now published are, in brief, as follows:

(*i*) Military discipline from nine months to a year, comparable with that of the armed forces.

(*ii*) Social service and manual labour for at least four hours a day, in selected areas. The work to be so organized that the community derives tangible and lasting benefit.

(*iii*) A broad general education, laying stress on the improvement of English, learning of Hindi and other regional languages, improvement of general knowledge, acquaintance with India's cultural heritage, programmes of social and economic planning and so on, so that the participants, on completing their national service, are fit and active enough to take their place in life even if they do not enter a university. The period of national service should also be fully utilized for the emotional integration of youth with the country and its ideals.

The young people to be subjected to the scheme are those who have graduated from high schools or higher secondary schools and are preparing to enter a university. On leaving school, students are to be sent out for a year to rural areas where they will be accommodated in camps.

Several questions come to mind. First of all, who are the pupils

who will be compelled to do this national service? The larger proportion of pupils who pass out from high schools and higher secondary schools come from rural areas. Therefore, it simply means that these students will be going back where they belong. Their being imbued further with ideas of the dignity of labour sounds rather absurd. Besides, only about 15 per cent of our school-leaving population goes on to college. Is the scheme, on which a colossal sum of money is to be spent, meant only for this small percentage? If it is to be accepted as an excellent scheme which is to achieve all that it says it will, then why discriminate in favour of this amall percentage? If it is meant to include those who do not go to college, then it is certainly going to present great hardship to those parents who depend to some extent on their children's earnings. These children either go out as apprentices for vocations or begin to earn their living in other ways as soon as they can.

One may also ask, is the scheme a movement for educational reform? If it is, then could not all this be done in the schools themselves? Are not some progressive and better-placed schools already doing this through scouting and other extra-curricular activities? If some are not, it is mainly due to lack of aid and encouragement from the Government: a lack of finance, a lack of playing fields, a lack of space, a lack of adequate teachers. Why should not facilities be given to existing schools, and the money intended for the scheme utilized for improving conditions in schools? The dignity of manual labour is not a special privilege of rural areas alone. If schools in rural and urban areas were given playgrounds, plots for gardening, workshops for carpentry, weaving, book-binding and so on, there would be plenty of scope to teach the dignity of manual labour. Indiscipline would also become a lesser problem, and with improved conditions for work there would be a better teacher-pupil relationship, and better emotional integration with the ideals of the country.

A curious fact that strikes one on reading the Report is that the committee feels that if young people are taken out of their existing environment and exposed to effective and lasting influences of corporate life, 'they will improve in physical health, they will be inspired with a zeal for serving the country'. How we can get lost in a sea of words and high-sounding sentiments! Is there no corporate or community life in schools? If teachers today are incapable of instilling and achieving all the committee hopes to achieve, then where are the people or teachers who are going to be the guiding spirits of our youth during the period of national service? Is there going to be an entirely different batch of people for this purpose? Where are they to be recruited from? Is another sum of money

to be spent on their 'very special' training? For it must be something very special if they have to achieve in one year what our teachers have not been able to achieve in 11 or 12 years of schooling.

The committee also feels that there will be an over-all improvement in physical health in this year of training. Perhaps its members have never lived in a typical Indian village with its insanitary living conditions, impure water supply, and a total lack of the elementary principles of hygiene. After our youth has been exposed to this for a year will it be anxious to come back to the rural areas as teachers, doctors and nurses! Or is it hoped that in one year youth will give the village everything it lacks?

Another of the aims of the committee lies in the vague hope that young people will be more mature when entering universities after a year of national service. If maturity, in the sense that the committee visualizes it, is not possible to achieve in 11 or 12 years of schooling, it cannot be achieved by adding just one more year of national service. If the aim of the committee is to raise the age for university entrance, then this is certainly no way of doing it. A broadened, improved and extended secondary education may do this better.

The whole report is half-baked. It is vague; the assumptions it has made lack factual study and evidence. The committee seems to have lacked the courage of its convictions. If it wanted compulsory military service to instil discipline, it should have said so outright and not carefully avoided the word 'conscription'. If on the other hand it wanted educational reform then it should not have confused the issues. It is a queer recipe suggested for removing our educational evils: a pinch of military discipline with a handful of manual work, to which has been added the salt of improvement in the study of languages and cultural subjects. There are no concrete, practical suggestions as to how the recommendations are to be implemented. No committee has a right to recommend anything, unless it has given thought to the 'how' of the implementations as well as the practicability of them. The committee has merely passed the baby to the as yet unborn National Board, which it is recommended should be set up to delimit and solve the problem. Most important of all, it has very studiously avoided the vital question of finance: how much the scheme will cost and whether the money is available. At a recent discussion someone said that, taking the total number of pupils to be 11 lakhs, it will cost a hundred crores of rupees a year.

One cannot lose sight of the effect the scheme would have on existing ones: the Boy Scout Movement; the National Cadet Corps; the Village Apprentice Scheme; the National Discipline Scheme.

A glance at the appendix of the report will reveal that the scheme has one factor in common with all others, and that is in its aims. Is it therefore necessary to add the National Service Scheme to those already existing? Let us rather review the work that is being done by any one or other existing scheme. If it is worth while, let additional money be spent in expanding and improving these. Let those schemes that are redundant or overlap, as some of them definitely do, be scrapped. Let us not spend, or contemplate the spending of, large sums of money on new schemes.

The scheme has been put forward by a learned body of vice-chancellors and secretaries of the Ministries of Defence and Education. A recent conference of vice-chancellors at Poona gave approval and sanction to the scheme. Thus it has the further approval of yet another batch of academicians. We would like to ask how many of these people have been in direct touch with youth at school, or with the schools themselves. We would like to know why no headmasters, teachers, and others directly connected with students, were called upon to give their opinions, even if they were not directly represented on the committee. There is no reference in any part of the report to girls. We take it therefore that the scheme is to be applicable only to boys, and this perhaps also explains why no woman was included on the committee.

BEHROZE J. M. CURSETJEE

Since this article was received the newspapers have announced further developments.

A Working Group appointed by the Union Government recommends that the programme should be implemented in two stages. In view of the difficulties of finance, the Group recommends that the scheme be limited to those students seeking entrance to universities. It also states that part of the cost of implementation is to be borne by parents, who are to consider this extra year as the twelfth year of secondary education.

The cost of this revised National Service Scheme is estimated at Rs 50 crores spread over five years. The date for launching the scheme is July 1962.

Teachers, parents and the general public therefore have time to think and put forward their views.

EDITOR

Book Reviews

J. WREFORD WATSON (ed.): *Nelson's School Atlas* (Nelson 1960), Demy 4to, pp. xvi+60, 12*s*. 6*d*.

If school children are to develop the atlas habit, an atlas that is designed essentially for them is a fundamental need. *Nelson's School Atlas* has been specially planned for senior school children and is sure to arouse their interest.

Besides maps, the atlas includes diagrams of the structure of the universe, the solar system, the earth's crust, erosion, deposition, and land-forms. These topics normally figure in school geography and they are beautifully and interestingly presented in this book.

Topics of general geography have been dealt with in a very graphic way. Page by page we are shown how man is conditioned by his environment. From various maps of the British Isles we see the influence of relief and geology on human occupations; the dependence of industries on available power; the action of seas and glaciers; conditions that favour agricultural pursuits; industrialization of areas around iron and coal fields. Pictures of the area concerned are used side by side with maps. They illustrate, and help us to determine and evaluate, the potent factors of why settlement and cultivation are where they are.

Instead of dealing with units of isolated countries, each continent is first surveyed as a whole on a physical map. This is followed by a series of regional groupings.

The maps themselves are simple, informative and interesting. They catch the eye and hold attention. The tones of colour used are light, soft and pleasing. The physical maps have a blend of 3-dimensional modelling and colour, thus presenting a kind of 'visual relief'. Natural vegetation is represented by appropriate symbols and an absence of these symbols indicates cultivated areas.

A highlight of the atlas is that the maps are designed to bring out only the important facts. All unnecessary details are cut out, with the result that essential place-names are not hidden in a crowd of those of lesser importance.

Another salient feature is that, besides the general index at the end of the atlas, a vertical coloured bar is provided at the edge of each page on which is listed the name of the continent, the scale, and an index of details given in the map itself. Economic information is also provided to show the basic resources required for modern industry.

All these distinguishing features along with a durable cover and strong binding would make *Nelson's School Atlas* an attractive tool in the hands of school-going youngsters. A tool enabling them to explore this fascinating world.

The publishers of atlases in India would do well to deal with topics in a similar manner, giving specific examples from Indian regions. By familiarizing children with their homeland, a foundation could be laid for a study of lifelong interest.

* * *

A Report Prepared for the Mathematical Association of Great Britain: *Mathematics in Secondary Modern Schools* (Bell, 1959), Medium 8vo, pp. vi+221, 12*s*. 6*d*.

This is a report prepared for the Mathematical Association of Great Britain by a committee originally appointed in 1946. As the title itself suggests, the report has been prepared with special reference to the problems and conditions obtaining in secondary modern schools in Great Britain.

The book contains pointed, constructive suggestions for profitable activities, and practical hints. It provides ample food for thought for reorienting and revitalizing the mathematics syllabus. Methods are suggested to suit the changing conditions and needs. All this is compressed within the 221

pages of this valuable report, which makes it equally useful and interesting to mathematics teachers in secondary schools in India and to those responsible for framing the syllabus, and writing and scrutinizing school texts in mathematics.

Taking its cue from an equally useful and valuable earlier report of the Association (*The Report on the Teaching of Mathematics in Primary Schools* published in 1955) and working within the broad principles already indicated in the interim report (published in 1949), the present report discusses, in its first part, the strategic considerations of the appropriate purpose, the new approach, and the proper organization of mathematics teaching at the secondary school level. In the second part it discusses in detail the points indicated in the first part. The note sounded regarding the variance in mathematical knowledge and ability of pupils in the same class is equally applicable here in India and the hints given in this respect deserve careful consideration. The report stresses the imperative need for taking note of the probable vocational interests and of making 'the school pupils see mathematics as a subject that touches on their lives and is worth their attention'. It therefore reviews critically each item included in the traditional syllabus and includes only those ideas related to real situations, to be introduced through experiences and experiments, which all pupils need again and again as they adventure into the realm of mathematics. The report also indicates, in some detail, mathematical ideas and techniques related to modern developments to make citizens aware of the relevance of mathematics to their everyday lives. In mathematical experiences and procedures, verbal descriptions and procedures are, according to the report, not enough and therefore 'mere learning of rules will fail to carry over into new contexts'.

The report deals with various topics of practical importance to the teacher such as the distinction between revision and remedial work, its twofold nature, diagnosis of attainment, the function of the practical topic, use of the environment, topics of contemporary importance and interest, vocational interests, relation of mathematics to other subjects and how practical topics themselves indicate a teaching method. Other topics pertaining to the organization of mathematics teaching in the school, such as staffing, syllabus, textbooks, time allowance, classroom organization, examination and testing, also find a place in the report.

A long and very useful chapter deals with mathematical ideas and procedures within the scope of the ordinary pupil. Topics likely to be suitable and relevant to pupils' interests together with comments on the mathematical implications of what they have to learn are included.

The index at the end adds to the utility of the report. The report deserves to be carefully studied by all concerned, particularly by mathematics teachers in secondary schools and by method masters in training colleges. It should certainly find an important place on the shelf of teachers' libraries in secondary schools and in the libraries of training colleges.

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A. S. Hornby: *The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence Patterns, Stage I* (Oxford, 1959), Crown 8vo, pp. lii+170, 6*s*.

This book, by a well-known expert in the teaching of English as a foreign language, is an invaluable book for teachers—experienced or otherwise—who are concerned with the teaching of English at the early stages, in schools where the medium of instruction is not English.

The syllabuses in use today usually lay out material in the form of graded structures, or arrangements of words in sentence patterns. This book

presents the various language items through a number of carefully selected sentence patterns suitable in classroom situations, summarized in a concise form in substitution tables. The material that should be taught in a first or second year syllabus is, therefore, made available to the teacher at a glance. This first section is followed by detailed and valuable suggestions on how these constructions may be introduced and drilled.

While the syllabuses and methods advocated may vary to some extent, the present emphasis everywhere is on ways of presenting structural words, and phrase and sentence patterns. There is a large measure of agreement on the early language items to be taught, though there may be some variations in the order of presentation. The language material in this book is so clearly summarized in tables that the teacher, teaching either according to a flexible or a rigid syllabus, will be able to find at a glance the items he is required to deal with. For example, there is a certain amount of difference of opinion as to when the question form should be introduced. The scheme presented in this book introduces it at an early stage, an arrangement that most teachers will welcome. If, however, the syllabus requires postponement, notes are provided to indicate how the question-and-answer work may be postponed.

Heads of schools should provide every teacher of English with his own individual copy of this little book, so that all teachers may make the utmost possible use of it. The book is to be followed by a companion volume that should prove equally useful.

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B. L. HAMPSON and K. C. EVANS: *Science from the Beginning* (Oliver and Boyd, 1960) Book I, Medium 8vo, pp. 70, 6*s*.

One of the surest ways of arousing the young child's interest in nature would be to put this excellent book in his hands.

Fully illustrated with pictures in beautiful colours, it contains a great deal of information which should be a part of every child's general knowledge. The contents are graded; there are chapters about animals, their food, ways and habits; about plants and their appearance in different seasons; about insects, birds, and fish. But it is not only living things that claim the attention of the author. The book contains chapters on air and water, on rocks and sand, on the sun, the earth, the moon and the stars, on day and night, and on the seasons.

The presentation of the matter is simple. Each 'lesson' as it is called, takes up only two pages so that the child's interest in a particular topic does not flag. On one page of each lesson the facts are presented in short, easy sentences; on the opposite page colourful pictures illustrate the text. The highlights of each lesson are the sections: 'For you to draw', 'For you to write', and 'For you to do'. 'For you to draw' may have either the actual illustrations for the child to copy or it may be a direction such as this: 'Draw a picture of cliffs, boulders, pebbles and sand. Call it Big Rocks and Little Rocks.'

'For you to write' contains a few interesting and simple exercises on the subject-matter of the lesson. 'For you to do' has plenty of material with which the child can occupy himself and which helps him to assimilate the facts in a practical way. For example, some of the instructions are: Collect the different things that fall from trees; try and find the trees they come from. Find the names of the insects in your house. When you have a meal, find out which parts are plant and which parts animal. If you know anyone who has a rabbit, find out what he eats.

These examples show that the exercises have been well thought out and are such as will keep the interest

of the child alive. There is not a dull sentence here.

This book is essentially meant for young children. The binding is stout, and the print large and clear. It will prove as enjoyable to a teacher as it will to the child.

We look forward to the subsequent books which we hope will be published in this series shortly.

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ALEXANDER M. ROSS: *The Education of Childhood* (Harrap, 1960), Post 8vo, pp. 159, 10*s*. 6*d*.

The charm of Dr Ross's book lies in the easy persistence with which he calls attention to the problems of primary education, the needs of the primary schools, and the difficulties confronting the primary teacher in a world not yet alive to the importance of the training given to children between the ages of seven and twelve. To Dr Ross, the world revolves round the 'juniors', and he is persuasive in his attempt to make the world see this. Primary education, it is his theory, ought to have an all-round purpose, with the integrated development of the child as its objective.

From his writing, it is clearly seen how far this ideal has been achieved in the United Kingdom and how much remains yet to be done. There are in his presentation all the good intentions of our own basic education advocates, plus a practical understanding of the limits of theory and a tactful avoidance of rousing needless controversy. Nowhere is the latter more evident than when he treats of the educational inspector and the parent, two intruders into the quiet harmony of the schoolroom. With a good deal of humouring, he presses his points home. The inspector is expected to impart to particular schools the vast knowledge and perspective he gains from his experience with all schools. The parent's special knowledge of one child is to assist the teacher in tiding over particular difficulties without imposing too much on his general management of the class.

Dr Ross has something to say too about the special needs of schools in depressed areas, which are apt to be overlooked in the dispositions of local authority funds, and the importance of attracting more devoted teachers to the institutions which cater for over 90 per cent of the population in the United Kingdom. *The Education of Childhood* goes into detailed exposition of the problems of curricula, equipment and methods of teaching, stressing at every point the importance of drawing out the child's initiative and individuality, and of awakening, or rather fostering, his interest and curiosity.

Of special interest to teachers, the book contains much that could be read with profit by everyone. It is an invaluable contribution towards building an enlightened society and securing the health of the community.

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